wherein R^1 and R^2 are individually a hydrogen atom or a saturated or unsaturated aliphatic acyl group having 2-25 carbon atoms or a benzoyl group, and R^3 is a hydrogen atom, hydroxyl group, alkyl group, aryl group, or aralkyl group, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof as an effective component, and

a gel-forming polymer base.

2. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 1, containing 0.5 to 90 wt % of the gel-forming polymer base.

4. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 1, containing 0.5 to 50 wt % of an enteric coating base.

5. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 4, wherein the enteric coating base is selected from the group consisting of hydroxypropylmethylcellulose acetate succinate, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, cellulose acetate phthalate, carboxymethylethylcellulose, and methacrylic acid copolymer.

6. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 1, containing 0.5 to 50 wt % of an insoluble coating base.

8. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 6, comprising 0.5 to 90 wt % of a gel-forming polymer base, and 0.5 to 50 wt % of an enteric coating base and/or 0.5 to 50 wt % of an insoluble coating base.

10. (Twice Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 1, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80 wt % of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the paddle method of the Japanese Pharmacopoeia.

18. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 2, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80 wt % of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the paddle method of the Japanese Pharmacopoeia.

19. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 3, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80 wt % of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the paddle method of the Japanese Pharmacopoeia.

20. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 4, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80 wt % of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the paddle method of the Japanese Pharmacopoeia.

21. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 5, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required

for the preparation to dissolve 80 wt % of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the paddle method of the Japanese Pharmacopoeia.

B5 Cont

22. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 6, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80 wt % of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the paddle method of the Japanese Pharmacopoeia.

23. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 7, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80 wt % of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the paddle method of the Japanese Pharmacopoeia.

24. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 8, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80 wt % of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to ~~the paddle~~ method of the Japanese Pharmacopoeia.

Please add new Claims 25-31 as follows:

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25. (NEW) The controlled-release oral preparation according to claim 6, wherein the insoluble coating base is an aminoalkylmethacrylate copolymer.

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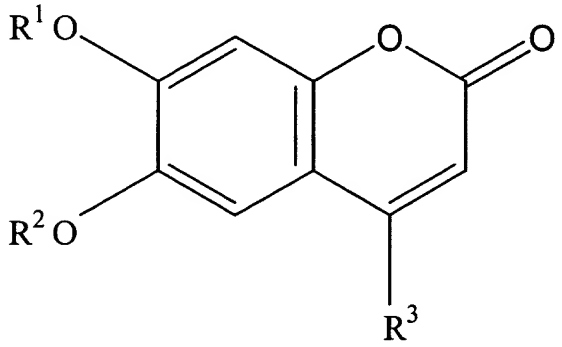
26. (NEW) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 8, wherein the enteric coating base is selected from the group consisting of hydroxypropylmethylcellulose acetate succinate, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, cellulose acetate phthalate, carboxymethylethylcellulose, and methacrylic acid copolymer, and the insoluble coating base is selected from the group consisting of ethylcellulose and aminoalkylmethacrylate copolymer.

27. (NEW) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 1, comprising a granulated mixture of esculetin or its derivative and the gel-forming polymer base.

28. (NEW) A controlled-release oral preparation comprising:

a granulated mixture of: a) esculetin, or its derivative shown by the formula (I),



(I)

wherein R^1 and R^2 are individually a hydrogen atom or a saturated or unsaturated aliphatic acyl group having 2-25 carbon atoms or a benzoyl group, and R^3 is a hydrogen atom,

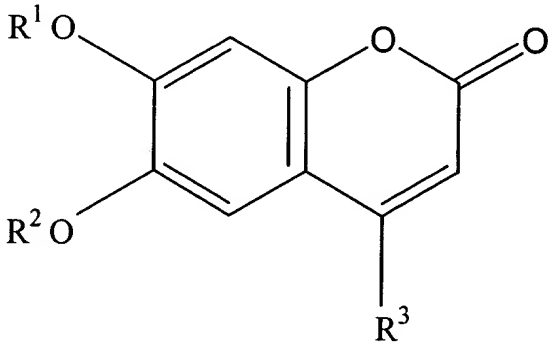
hydroxyl group, alkyl group, aryl group, or aralkyl group, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof as an effective component; and b) a gel-forming polymer base; and

an enteric capsule containing the granulated mixture.

29. (NEW) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 28, wherein the enteric capsule comprises an enteric coating base selected from the group consisting of hydroxypropylmethylcellulose acetate succinate, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, cellulose acetate phthalate, carboxymethylethylcellulose, and methacrylic acid copolymer.

30. (NEW) A controlled-release oral preparation comprising:

a tablet comprising a compressed mixture of: a) esculetin, or its derivative shown by the formula (I),



(I)

wherein R^1 and R^2 are individually a hydrogen atom or a saturated or unsaturated aliphatic acyl group having 2-25 carbon atoms or a benzoyl group, and R^3 is a hydrogen atom,

hydroxyl group, alkyl group, aryl group, or aralkyl group, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof as an effective component; and b) a gel-forming polymer base; and an enteric coating base sprayed on the compressed mixture.

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31. (NEW) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 30, wherein the enteric coating base is selected from the group consisting of hydroxypropylmethylcellulose acetate succinate, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, cellulose acetate phthalate, carboxymethylethylcellulose, and methacrylic acid copolymer.